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ABSTRACT

The relationship between two diverse but commonly used psychotherapy process rating scales was determined by correlating therapist statements classified via the Hill Interaction Matrix with statements rated on the dimensions of empathy, respect, genuineness, and specificity. Results suggest these measures share significant common variance. Empathy and specificity correlated highly with the fourth quadrant of the Hill Interaction Matrix. (Author)

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Towards a Validation of Diverse Measures of Human Interaction and Counseling Process

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Recent attempts to ascertain the effectiveness of psychotherapy have led to the construction of rating scales to measure dimensions assumed to be of major importance to any successful helping relationship. Attempts to validate such scales have taken many forms. The present research investigated the relationship of two commonly used but diverse methods of measuring human interaction and counseling process. It was assumed that since both are purported to be related to positive therapeutic outcome, a significant relationship could be expected and that this relationship could be taken as evidence of convergent validity.

Standard rating scales developed by Truax (Truax and Carkhuff, 1967) and modified by Carkhuff (Carkhuff & Berenson, 1967) were used. The scales used assessed the dimensions of empathy, respect, genuineness, and specificity. These scales have been frequently used in so-called facilitative conditions research and have been related to a variety of client therapeutic outcome measures (Truax & Carkhuff, 1967).

The Hill Interaction Matrix (HIM) developed by Coppleno & Hill in 1959 was the comparison process measure. It has been used less frequently than the facilitative conditions rating scales but there are a growing number of studies reporting its experimental use. The HIM is a tool which allows for the conceptualization and assignment of verbal interactions along two dimensions. Interactions are identified as to their content, the thing being discussed and as to the process or manner in which it is discussed.

According to Hill, when interactions fall into four of the twenty cells, (quadrant four) the occurence of therapeutic work may be assumed; specifically, when the process is speculative or confrontive and the content is personal or deals with relationship then "therapeutic work" is occurring. Conversely, interactions classified in the other cells indicate a minimal amount of "therapeutic work" is occurring. The HIM has provided systematic and discriminating quantitative values of interactions in group and individual therapy. There is growing evidence for its usefulness and relation to therapeutic outcome (Hill, 1964, 1971).

The data which were rated were 60 9-minute samples of helper-helpee interaction. These samples were taken from the audio tape recordings of five professional counselors working with ten university counseling center clients and ten trainees whom they were supervising.

A correlation matrix is presented in Table 1 comparing the four facilitative conditions ratings and the percent of therapist statements falling in quadrant four of the HIM. It is interesting to note the rather high correlations between empathy, specificity and quadrant four of the HIM. This would lead to the conclusion that despite very different approaches to the conceptualization and rating tasks these three process measures share considerable common variance. It is difficult to interpret the meaning of the rather low correlations between the HIM, respect and genuineness. It should be noted that the variance for these two measures was small thus leading to a restriction in range.

This work should be followed up with additional process scale measurement and differing samples of interactions. Continued comparisons with other measuring devices will lead to convergent and discriminant validation and greater utility of process measures.

TABLE 1

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coeficients of Facilitative Conditions Ratings and Percent of therapist Responses falling in Quadrant Four of the HIM.

	Empathy	Specificity	Respect	Genuineness	HIM
Empathy	1.00				
Specificity	.57*	1.00			
Respect	-.13	-.24	1.00		
Genuineness	.04	-.02	.02	1.00	
HIM	.61*	.55*	-.03	.05	1.00

*Significant at .01 level

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